

Augustana Endowment Society
Historical Reflections from May 2019
by Janet Moline

Dr. and Mrs. E. F. Bartholomew

Last week the Augustana Historical Society had a program by geographer Matt Fockler about how various places on the campus could be compared: how they looked decades ago and how that scene appears today. The slough which now contains a drain that allows rain water overflow to flow underground to the Miss. River used to flow on the surface across campus, through a marshy low area over which a bridge had to be built.

There were two houses bordering that ravine south of 7th Ave, one being at 755 35th St, located somewhat north of where Olin stand today. That house at 755 was built in 1878 and would be used by faculty and staff until it was razed in 1934. It first was occupied by Dr. Olof Olsson, who would become the third President of Augustana. In 1888 it became the residence of Dr. Edward and Kate Bartholomew. Dr. Edward Frey Bartholomew graduated from Gettysburg College and eventually received a Doctor of Divinity, Ph. D, and a Doctor of Law. He was the second president of Carthage College, and became a professor of English literature and philosophy at Augustana from 1888 until his retirement 44 years later. He and Kate had five children, Frank died young, Netta and George, who married and lived elsewhere in the city and Cotta and Paul who never married. Cotta was the Society editor of the Rock Island Argus and Paul became a carpenter. When Dr. Bartholomew decided to build a new home, his son Paul would construct it. The location of this house would be nearby, but up the slope at 741 34th St., an area called Island View Heights. Its location mirrored the recommendation of an 1896 book in Dr. E. F.'s library by Samuel Parsons, Jr. entitled "The Home Grounds" which stated:

"When you select your village lot, don't be deluded by the picturesque charm of badly drained ravines, where nothing will grow except at the cost of a large amount of labor and expense. Choose rather a good, honest, level piece of ground, well drained, and with warm and mellow soil. It will surprise you to see what picturesque effects you can obtain with the exercise of some pains and ingenuity, and above all, your grass and plants will thrive as it may not be possible to make them in the ravine."

This well-crafted and spacious house was started in 1909 and was finished in 1910, when E.F., Kate, Cotta and Paul moved in. Dr. E.F. lived from March 24, 1846 until June 10, 1946. On his 100th birthday, he received a congratulatory letter from President Truman, which read:

“Your record of fifty continuous years in the educational field is, in itself, a notable Achievement and you will, I am sure, find inspiration and satisfaction in the thought that you had a part in the formative years of so many young people. This is indeed a crowning glory to the rounding out of a full century of your active and useful life.”

Daughter Cotta was willed the house and Paul, the shop on the property, its contents and the car. When Cotta died in 1969, she willed the house to Paul. After his death at the age of 90, the property was sold in 1974 to George Henning. I think Paul would be happy to know that the house he so carefully built continues to be lovingly cared for by George and Zen Henning.